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The Jewish Monument at Kaifungfu.

By W. A. P. Martin, D.D., LL.D.

China surpasses all nations in the number if not the antiquity of her stone monuments. Yet even among the most ancient there are not many that interest a foreign student, because they have little or nothing to add to her historical records, which are so copious and in general so reliable.

There are two, however, that form a notable exception in both aspects, *viz.* the Nestorian Tablet at Singan and the Jewish Tablet at Kaifung. The first records the earliest attempt to propagate the Christian Faith in this Empire; the other commemorates not a propaganda but the fortunes of a colony professing an ancient faith to which all the churches of Christendom owe their origin. Not only does this fact appeal to our sympathies, our interest is intensified by the circumstance that native historians make little or no reference either to the Nestorian Mission or to the Jewish colony.

The existence of a company of Chinese Jews at the ancient capital in Honan was made known in a curious way to Ricci and his colleagues, who were the first Christian missionaries to establish themselves in Peking. A Chinese of official rank introduced himself as belonging to their faith, but it soon became apparent that there were only

two points of likeness—he believed in one God and he was not a Mahomedan. Yet of Jesus Christ he had never heard!

From that day the Jesuit missionaries began to make enquiry concerning the colony, and they put themselves in communication with these Jews in the hope of winning them over to the Christian creed. That hope has not been realised ; yet the interest awakened three centuries ago in the bosom of those disciples of Loyola has not altogether died out from among their successors of the present day. For is it not to Père Tobar of the Jesuit Mission at Zicawei that we are indebted for the most recent as well as the most complete collection of documents relating to that lonely colony ? I advise all who seek for ample and accurate information on this subject to consult his painstaking brochure *Les Inscriptions Juives de Kaifongfou*,—published in 1900.

The researches of Protestant missionaries in that direction began in 1849. At the instance of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, a deputation consisting of two native Christians was despatched to Kaifungfu by Bishop Smith and Dr. Medhurst. Several Hebrew MSS. were obtained, and a full report of their expedition was translated from their journals by Dr. Edkins and given to the world with a valuable preface by Bishop Smith. The messengers also brought back copies of this monument, together with sundry minor inscriptions, all of which were translated by Dr. Edkins and comprised in a little volume.

Among the discussions to which this report gave rise, one of the most striking was a paper by Mr. Alex. Wylie, in which he attempted to show that a religion called 祢教 *hien kiao*, and described in Chinese books as existing in many parts of the Empire, was Judaism.

Mr. Deveria has, however, according to Père Tobar, proved conclusively that by *hien kiao* the Chinese meant Manichæans or Persian fire-worshippers.

It remains a mystery why a community that had a large and conspicuous place of worship sanctioned by the Throne were so completely ignored by native writers. Père Tobar affirms that not even the most distant allusion to them is to be found in two typographical works which give an account of the temples and mosques of this city. The only certain reference to them hitherto discovered is in a book "Against Corrupt Doctrines," quoted by R. P. Havret and cited by Père Tobar.

The author offers the information (or is it conjecture?) that the Nestorian Tablet was fabricated by the Jews of Kaifung in collusion with those of Singan, and buried it in the earth in order that after being exhumed it might claim the credit of a venerable antiquity. From this specimen of antiquarian research what are we to think of the intelligence and opinions of writers of his class? Is it not obvious that the Jews were not overlooked, but studiously ignored as if by conspiracy of silence? Such a glaring omission goes far to shake our confidence in the good faith of Chinese historians generally. In fact, it is only where there is no motive for perversion that we can venture to take their statements at their face value.

In reading over the new tract, *Sur les Inscriptions Juives*, I find no evidence of any direct intercourse between the early Missionaries and those Jews. They were not free at any time to circulate through the interior, as we are now, and there is room to suppose that in their communications they made use of native agents, just as did Smith and Medhurst, and for the same reasons. If this surmise be well founded it confers on me a distinction to which, until this

hour, I never aspired, *viz.* that of being the first foreigner, not merely of recent times but absolutely the first without exception, to visit those exiles and to witness their deplorable condition.

Early in 1866 I set out from Peking with the intention of crossing the Hwangho at Kaifung, and, after inquiring into the state of the Jews, to strike the great River at Hankow. The first part of this journey I was happily permitted to carry into execution, but the continuation of my voyage through Honan and Hupei was defeated by the occurrence of troubles in the interior which made it impossible to obtain means of transport. After passing through Shantung, and making a pious pilgrimage to the tomb of Confucius, gaining the honors of a *hadji*, I accordingly proceeded to Shanghai by way of the Grand Canal.

The whole journey lay over comparatively untrodden ground, everything was novel, and I made use of more vehicles than the "four" employed by Yu the Great, *viz.* the feet of a biped and those of a quadruped; the wheels of a monocycle and a bicycle (wheelbarrow and cart); sedan, sailboat and steamer. But I have given the narrative in my Hanlin Papers and in my Cycle of Cathay, and I do not propose to give a repetition of the details.

Well do I recall the sad impression made on my mind by the aspect of a vacant lot, with nothing but a stone to mark the spot where a synagogue of the "Pure and the True" had once stood. My presence attracted a promiscuous crowd, some of whom professed themselves descendants of Abraham. Their claim, I fancied, was confirmed by their features, although through mixture with the people of the land their complexion had become as yellow as that of any other dwellers on the banks of the Yellow River. The earliest settlers must have taken Chinese wives, as on the

monument there is no reference to the coming of Jewish women.

Standing on the site of their demolished temple, I was surrounded by members of most of their seven families, and resting my hand on the gravestone of a buried Faith I spoke to them of Him who was born King of the Jews, who is now the spirit and King of the greatest nations of the earth, of whom a prophet declared at His birth that He would be a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel.

No language can exaggerate the decadence in which I found them. Their demolished house was a sad symbol of the congregation. They confessed with shame that, having become a ruin, it was torn down by their own hands. They had sold its stones and timbers to save themselves from perishing of hunger. All knowledge of the sacred tongue had been lost; and though they still possessed a few copies of the Law written on sheepskins or goatskins, they only waited for purchasers, and I secured two of them. A Mahomedan mufti, by whom I was politely received, denounced them as *kafirs* (unbelievers) and said that while some had come over to the Prophet of Mecca others had become Buddhists, and one of them had risen to the dignity of the Buddhist priesthood. Alas! That fragment torn from Mount Ziou and projected into the plain of central China, after standing there and pointing Heavenward for so many centuries, was on the eve of being engulfed in the ocean of error!

Its testimony has not been altogether lost, but if it is not become a thing of the past, if the golden candlesticks are ever again to give light, the first essential is to rebuild the temple. What would have become of the Jews who returned from Babylon if they had not rebuilt the sanctuary in Jerusalem?

Not only was it a rallying centre to their tribes, it became a light to the whole world, fulfilling that wonderful prediction that the glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of Solomon's Temple. Arriving in Shanghai, I urged this plea on the rich Jews of that Settlement, and they were not backward to ask questions, but not one of them came forward to lend a helping hand. Two or three of these poor fellows were indeed invited to Shanghai to take lessons in Hebrew ; but that was like giving a company of shipwrecked people lessons in navigation, instead of providing them with a ship to continue their voyage !

The year after my visit Herr Liebermoun, an enterprising Jewish traveller, made his way to Kaifung, but, ignorant of the Chinese language, he was not able to learn anything of consequence. Two or three years later (I believe in 1870) those poor Israelites were visited by another foreigner, the Rev. Dr. Schereschewsky (now Bishop). His mission was expressly to try to gather in the wandering sheep, to say to them "we have found the Messiah of whom Moses and the Prophets spake." He was not allowed time to deliver his message, but summarily expelled by an angry crowd, set on, no doubt, by suspicious mandarins.

In the Spring of the present year (1904) they were honored by the attention of another distinguished visitor, Professor Jenks of the U.S. Monetary Commission. Though called to aid the Chinese Government in wrestling with the perplexing problems of a disordered currency, his thoughts were not confined to gold and silver. Besides enquiring into the condition of the Jews and procuring rubbings of their solitary monument, he left the Rev. G. D. Wilder, who had acted as his interpreter, at Kaifung to make further enquiries. Two of these rubbings he presented to me, and afterwards sent me a letter of Mr. Wilder's, from which I shall make a

few extracts. Every line reveals a deepening shadow settling over the heads of that doomed colony. Desperate as their condition appeared to me in 1866, their circumstances have certainly not improved in the nine and thirty years since elapsed. The only spark of hope remaining is the fact that a chapel has been opened in Kaifung by the China Inland Mission, where some of these castaways may find a door of refuge. Mr. Wilder conducted a religious service in that chapel more than once during his stay. He says: "Five or six Jews came in one evening. They seemed very much at home in the chapel, but devoid of any religious interest. They all have idols, but declared that some of the Jews had none: on enquiry it appeared that these latter were only such as were too poor to have anything more than food and clothing."

Many names have been erased from the tablet, and Mr. Wilder throws a curious light on the cause of it. "A foreigner," he says, "came to Kaifung in 1870, and was well entertained at a good restaurant; but the next day the gentry proceeded to smash all the furniture, dishes, etc., and presumably the foreigner was driven out. Was it Schereschewsky? Whoever it was, the Jews were scared and several families scratched their names from the tablet." "Ai (one of the Jews) says that forty years ago his family had a parchment scroll that hung from the ceiling to the floor, covered with curious letters in gold. They scraped off the gilt and made the skin into coats and trousers."

Rev. Mr. Bevis of the C.I.M. sent me a manuscript copy of the Monument in January last (1904), and I made a translation of it, at his request, in idiomatic English, without the insertion of numerous parentheses and Chinese characters such as render most translations unreadable. Receiving the rubbings shortly after, I collated the copies and rectified

errors of transcription. Precious as they are, these documents set forth the ancient Faith in a very diluted form, openly asserting its identity with Confucianism, and borrowing largely the phraseology of Taoism. Yet those Jews who clung to the faith of their fathers with such tenacity appear to have felt that it was something higher than an ordinary school of philosophy. Says one of the inscriptions, in words to which we can cordially assent, "Alas! people only know of the Temple of the Pure and True as a place of worship in honor of *a doctrine*; but they do not know that this doctrine had its great source in Heaven! Is it merely for our own worldly advantage that we thus honor our Religion?"

Reiterating the wish that some benevolent person or association, Jew or Christian, may be induced, even at this late hour, to come to the rescue, rebuild the synagogue, and gather their children into schools, I leave the Monument to speak for itself.

NOTE TO ACCOMPANY TRANSLATION.

The two inscriptions are engraved on opposite sides of one stone. The oldest is dated in the 3rd year of Hung Chi (1485) and records a rebuilding of the synagogue. The other is only twenty-three years later (1512) and commemorates the erection of a special building to serve as a depository of the sacred books.

Along with much useless repetition, and some personal items of no interest to us, they both contain a precious record of the Faith, practice and history of those wandering Israelites.

The restoration on this occasion was not the first of the kind, as the edifice appears to have been rebuilt or repaired more than once. Its materials were perishable, and its site on the banks of an unruly stream exposed it to peculiar dangers, not to speak of risks which in common with all Chinese temples it had to encounter from war and rebellion.

Some of the dates seem to betray a hazy conception of the early history of their forefathers, e.g. they make no reference to the sojourn in Egypt, and in the comparatively short interval which they make between Abraham and Moses they do not allow time for it. Again, they place the birth of Abraham in the "146th year of the Chow dynasty." This, says Dr. Edkins, would coincide with the reign of Rehoboam, and he finds an ingenious solution of the difficulty in supposing that the writer intended the 146th year of the State of Chow, founded by Howtsieh about B.C. 2254.

JEWISH MONUMENT INSCRIPTION I.

[*Translation.*]

**To Record the Rebuilding of the Temple of the
Pure and True.**

The founder of the religion of Israel was Abraham, the 19th generation from Adam or Panku. Thus from the beginning of Heaven and Earth, sages have handed it down. It moulds no image, offers no flattery to gods or devils, puts no faith in magical practices. In fact, gods and devils bring no help, images no protection, magic no benefit.

We think of Heaven as something light and pure above our heads, the most august without a rival. Heaven does not speak in words. The four seasons run their course, and all things come to life. Seeing how grain grows in spring, ripens in summer, is gathered in autumn, and stored for winter; how birds, fishes, worms and plants bloom and fade, open and fall; each propagating its kind:—our founder awoke to a conception of this sublime mystery, and sought for a right religion, which should coöperate with the True Heaven; in singleness of heart seeking Heaven with reverence and sole devotion. Such is the origin of the Religion set up by Abraham and transmitted to the present day. We find that Abraham lived in the 146th year of the Chow Dynasty.

Again in the 613th year of the Chow Dynasty, it was transmitted to Moses, Patriarch of the True Religion. Moses was born with a knowing and profound mind, in which

mercy and justice were complete, truth and virtue combined. Seeking for the Scriptures on the top of Mount Sinai, he fasted forty days and nights, expelled bodily appetites, forgot food and drink, praying with a sincere mind, and his devout soul was in communion with the heart of Heaven. The Right Scriptures in one volume contain fifty-three books ; and they all have an authentic origin. In them are things most mysterious, most wonderful. Examples of good to move men's good feelings, and examples of bad to show the punishment of evil passions.

Another stage brought the tradition down to Ezra, a Patriarch of the right law. The institutions coming from this patriarch are in linked succession ; and this way of honoring Heaven by ritual worship is sufficient to explain the mysteries of our ancestral doctrine. That doctrine certainly has its root in a pure and true ritual worship. The pure is single without any second ; the true is right without any wrong ; rites express reverence, and worship is bowing down in humble attitude.

In our daily conduct we ought not for a moment to forget Heaven ; yet to worship morning, noon and night,—three times a day is the true rule of our Heavenly Doctrine. What preparation is required for this worship ? The first thing is a bath, and a change of raiment ; the heart must be pure, and the senses not distracted ; then we respectfully enter the presence of the Scriptures.

The Heavenly Tao (principle) is without form, yet it seems to be above us. Let us give an outline of the reverent worship of Heaven. First we bend the body in reverence to the Tao,—Tao is in that act. Secondly we stand in the centre without inclining to either side,—Tao is in that position. We are still and meditate in silence, paying honor to Tao, without forgetting Heaven. In every movement

we seek for and praise aloud that Heaven which suffers not the Tao to fall. We go back three steps to reverence the Tao that is behind; then advance five steps to honor the Tao in front of us: bending to the left to honor the Tao as a good Tao on the left hand, and to the right to honor Tao. Though the right is held to be unlucky, Tao is on the right hand. We look up and honor the Tao that is on high; we look down and honor the Tao that is near us. Finally we bow down and worship the Tao,—honor is in the act of worship. To honor Heaven and not to respect your ancestors is not to honor Heaven. In spring and autumn we make offerings to our ancestors, serving the dead as we serve the living. We make offerings only of beef and mutton, with fruits of the season. We do not because they have passed away cease to honor our ancestors. In every month there are four days for fasting. Fasting is the gate of Tao (truth), the basis on which to store up merit. By storing a good act to-day and a good act to-morrow, merit is treasured up, taking care to shun all sorts of evil, and to perform all sorts of good actions. Seven days of good conduct coming to an end, they turn about and begin again. This is what the *Yih King* (Book of Changes) speaks of when it says, "the happy man does good and finds the day too short." In each of the four seasons we spend seven days in abstinence in memory of the sufferings of our ancestors. Making offerings to ancestors we recompense the authors of our being, we abstain from food and drink for one day. In calling on Heaven we repent of the sins of the past, and apply ourselves to the new duties of to-day. This is what the Holy Sage meant in the Book of Changes under the diagram of Benefit (益) by saying that "wind and thunder are a benefit to the superior man; seeing the good he adopts it; and if he has faults he corrects them." Thus have our moral teachings

come down to us with no uncertain tradition. They came from India with Li, Ai, Kao, Chao, Chin, Shih, Chang, etc.—seventy Commissioners who were sent by authority to bring a tribute of Western cotton cloth to the Emperor of Sung. He said “You may come to our Empire and still observe the customs of your forefathers,”—and he retained them (the Commissioners) in Pien-liang (Kai-fung).

In the year of Kuei Wei the first of Lung-hsing in the reign of the Sung Emperor Hsiao (1163) the Wussuta, Rabbi Levi, took charge of the religion, and An-tu-la (a prefect) first built a temple. In the 16th year of Chih-yüan of the Yüan (or Mongol) Dynasty that ancient temple was rebuilt by the Wussuta-rabbis. It was called Ch'ing Chen Ssu, the Temple of the Pure and True, and was situated in the S.E. Corner of the T'u-tzu Market Street, with a circumference of three hundred and fifty feet. Coming to the great Ming Dynasty, the founder (Hung Wu) conciliated all under Heaven by bestowing on soldiers and people who submitted to him plots of ground and villages, where they might dwell in peace and enjoy the fruit of their labors. Truly he had a heart of impartial kindness. It was then felt that the temple should not be without the observance of a ritual. Accordingly Li Ch'êng, Li Shih, An-p'ing-t'u, Ai Tuan, Li Kuei, Li Chieh, Li Shêng, Li Kang, Ai Ching, Chou An, Li Jung, Li Liang, Li Chih, Chang Hao, noted for knowledge of our text books, were employed to exhort men to virtue, and bore the title of Moula. Their mode of teaching has been handed down to the present. In dress and social courtesy they conformed to the time, while in speech and act they followed the teaching of the ancients. Every man kept the law, and knew how to honor Heaven and show respect to ancestors, to render homage to rulers and piety to parents,—all this was due to their teaching. In the

19th year of Jung Lo (1421) the physician An Ch'êng received orders from Prince Ting of the Capital to offer incense and to rebuild the Temple of the Pure and True; in the middle there was placed an Imperial tablet of the Ming Emperors,—may they reign ten thousand years! In the 21st year of Jung Lo (1423), An Ch'êng being recommended for merit had the name Chao conferred on him by Imperial decree, and he was appointed to a command in Cheh-kiang. In the 10th year of Chêng-t'ung (1495), Li Jung and Li Liang at their own expense repaired three divisions of the front temple. In the 5th year of T'ien Shun (1461) the temple was overwhelmed by the River, and nothing but a ruin was left on the ground. Ai Ching and others on presenting a petition received through the prefect, as before, permission from the Provincial Treasurer to rebuild the ancient ruin of the year Chih-yuan, the temple of the Pure and True. Li Jung collected funds and restored its gilded ornaments, making it look as bright as if it were new. In the reign of Ch'êng Hua (1465-1487) Kao Chien, Kao Jui and Kao Shên contributed funds and added three sections to the rear temple. They also renewed the gilding and other ornaments, and deposited three copies of the Scriptures. They further made a covered passage to connect with the front temple; all being improvements of a permanent character. Such is the history of the temple front and rear. In the year of T'ien Shun (1461) Shih Pin, Li Jung, Kao Chien and Chang Hsüan procured one copy of the Scriptures of our religion from Ningpo. Chao Ying also brought a copy and joined the temple at K'ai-fêng. Kao Nien rose from a choice scholar to be magistrate of Hsi in Huichou; Ai Chün from M.A. became sub-prefect of Tê Fu. Chin Hsüan of Ninghsia had a grandfather who filled a post of grandee in the Council of State, and his

granduncle Shêng was commander of a thousand in the Imperial guard.

Hsüan bought brass furnaces, bottles and candlesticks for the table of offerings; and his brother Ying, in the 2nd year of Hung Chi (1489), contributed funds to buy a plot of ground for the temple. Ying and Chung by the agency of Chao Chün set up memorial stones. An-tu-la was first to lay the foundations; Li Jung and Kao Jui superintended the work to its completion. Others aided in restoring the temple by contributing money to build a Scripture shrine, a Scripture gallery, a Scripture table, a winding balustrade, a table for offerings, curtains and such like furniture. They also embellished its surroundings so as to make it an ornament to that quarter of the city.

We reflect that each of the three religions has a temple in honor of its founder. The Confucian has a "Hall of Great Perfection" in honor of Confucius. The Buddhist has a "Hall of the Holy Visage" in honor of Shakzamuni. The Taoist has a "Hall of the Pearl Sovereigns" in honor of the Three Precious Ones; and our Religion of the Pure and True has a Hall of Israel in honor of the King of Heaven.

The Confucian and our own religion are in harmony in all essentials, differing only on minor points. Their leading motive is to honor Heaven and show respect to ancestors, to show due regard to prince and minister, piety to parents, kindness to wife and children, and in intercourse with friends to give everyone place, high or low: in all this not departing from the doctrine of the Five Relations.

Alas! people only know of the Temple of the Pure and True as a place of worship in honor of a doctrine; but they do not know that this doctrine had its great source in Heaven; being handed down from ancient times, it should not be misunderstood. Is it merely for our own worldly

advantage that we thus honor our Religion ? Receiving the honor of the the Throne, and serving the Throne we do not fail in worship to ask Heaven to reward the sovereign and the state—praying that the Emperors of the great Ming Dynasty in virtue may surpass Yü and T'ang ; in wisdom may equal Yao and Shun ; that their lustre may rival sun and moon ; while their clemency is vast as Heaven and Earth. May the Throne last forever ! may His Majesty live ten thousand years ! and the Empire stand unshaken as long as Heaven and Earth ! May Wind and Rain be favourable, and all enjoy unbroken peace !

These prayers we engrave on this stone, to hand them down for a long time to come.

Composed by Chin Chung, Hsiu-ts'ai of Kaifungfu.

Written by Ts'ao Tso, Hsiu-ts'ai of Hsiang-fu Hsien.

Title in antique head-lines written by Fu Ju, Hsiu-ts'ai of Kaifungfu.

Descendants of the Pure and True have on a lucky day in midsummer set up this stone.

Date 2nd year of Hung Chih (1489).

The Masons Wuliang and Wuhai did the work.

INSCRIPTION II.

[*Translation.*]

**To Record the Building of a Temple in
honor of the Book of Truth.**

Composed by Tso T'ang, Doctor of Letters and Assistant Treasurer.

Copied in red by Kao K'ao, Member of the Hanlin Academy.

Antique head-lines written by Hsü Ang, Doctor of Letters.

Books are called the vehicle of Truth (Tao); but what is Truth? It is the principle to which men in all ages have looked for guidance of their daily life. Its higher manifestations are seen in the three relations and five virtues. While such is its minuteness that nothing can escape its influence. Tao pervades them all. Tao is not transmitted without books, and books are ineffective without Tao. Were there no books Tao would want a vehicle, and men would grope about not knowing where to go, eventually losing themselves in darkness and folly. The Tao of China's sages has been handed down in the Six Classics, a guide to posterity for ten thousand generations.

As to the Religion of the Israelites : our first ancestor was Adam, who originated in Si Yu (Central Asia). Our books appeared in the Chow Dynasty.

Our Books of Doctrine (Tao) in four parts contain fifty-three works. Their principles are profound, and their

teachings admirable. We honor them like Heaven. The founder of this religion was Abraham. Then our books were handed down from Moses, who wa our law-giver. After his time this original religion came and dwelt in China, in the dynasty of Han. In the first year of Lung Hsing of the Sung dynasty (1163) a place of worship was built in Kaifungfu. In the 16th year of Chih-yüan of the Yüan dynasty (1275) it was rebuilt as an ancient temple and devoted to the reverential preservation of these Scriptures. Not only in Kaifung, but under the whole Heaven, there are found professors of this religion ; and they do not fail to venerate these Scriptures and to respect this doctrine. Though the letters of these Scriptures differ from those of the books of the Confucian school, their teachings are identical, resting on the duties of common life. If put in practice by father and son, the father will be kind and the son filial ; if practised by sovereign and subject, the ruler will be merciful and the subject obedient : if practised by brothers, the elder will be friendly and the younger respectful : if practised by husband and wife, the husband will be patient and the wife submissive : if practised by friends, the friendship will gain in good faith. There is no higher Tao than Charity and Justice ; in practice it awakens conscience and brings out a sense of shame. There is no higher Tao than order and prudence : in practice it produces dignity of carriage and sincerity of purpose : if practised in fasting, the fast will be strict and reverent : if practised in the worship of ancestors, that worship will be filial and sincere : if practised in public worship, praises are offered to High Heaven for giving life to all things ; and every act springs from sincere reverence. In case of widows, orphans, diseased and cripples, it makes men give them succor, so that not one will be out of place. In case of those who are too poor to marry, or to bury their

dead, it makes men help with all their might to supply funds for marriage or funeral.

In times of mourning with abstinence from meats and wine, it lays no stress on outward show, but conforms to the authorized ritual, and puts no faith in superstition.

Coming to weights and measures, there is not one in which a believer would dare to cheat his fellowmen.

In the pursuit of letters there are those who have shed lustre on their parents, and made a name for themselves. There are some who have held office in and out of China proper, dispensing the Imperial favor to the people. Some have sacrificed their lives in resisting an enemy, thus repaying the favor of the Emperor; some by personal virtue have extended their influence to an entire neighbourhood. Coming down to those who plough the fields, they pay their taxes. Those who practise handicrafts meet the wants of the public. Our merchants have gone abroad and made a name on lake and river. Some too have got gain by staying at home and trading. All these have stood in awe of Heaven's will, and kept the laws of the king. They have observed the five relations and the five virtues, showing respect to ancestral usage and piety to parents; honoring their seniors, and treating neighbours with kindness; keeping close to teachers and friends, and teaching their offspring. Pursuing their calling, they have borne petty grievances with patience, and stored up merit. Such are the words of encouragement and restraint treasured up in these volumes; and such is the effect of their doctrines in common life. In them Heaven's will is completely set forth as the guide of nature, and the cultivation of Tao by means of teaching finds an open road. The virtues of Charity, Justice, Politeness and Prudence are thus cherished.

If moulded in images or painted in colors they are an idle display to beguile eye and ear ; they are heresies not fit to be followed. But those who venerate these Scriptures, know what they stand on ; for Scripture and doctrine have no uncertain source. In the beginning our ancestor Adam transmitted the doctrine to Noah ; Noah handed it down to Abraham ; Abraham passed it on to Isaac ; Isaac to Jacob ; Jacob to the heads of the twelve tribes ; the heads of the twelve tribes passed it on to Moses. Moses passed it to Aaron ; Aaron to Joshua, and Joshua to Ezra. With him the religion of the Fathers bloomed out into fresh brightness.

All who follow this religion pursue the good and shun the evil, day and night cultivating personal virtue with sincere earnestness. We fast on certain days, and in food and drink conform to our books, which we honor and believe.

May Heaven grant prosperity without stint ! May men seek the praise of virtue, and every family have the joy of offspring ! Such is the spirit of our ancestral religion. May its ritual worship be undisturbed !

We carve a stone in this temple to hand down to future ages ; that those who come after us may known its origin and and keep it in mind.

In the 7th year of Chêng Tê of the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1512) this temple was rebuilt by An, Li and Kao. Chin P'u of Yang chou contributed a copy of the Scriptures and set up a second gate. Chin Jun of Ning-hsia erected a pavilion over these stone tablets.

Chin Chung repaired the pavilion.

Chang Luan and Chang Hsi engraved the stone.





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